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Hegel and the Western Spirit

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This paper argues that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* ([1806] 1977) should be read as an invaluable work on the distinctive restlessness of Western culture – so long as we view this book as an account of the developmental experience of the *Western* spirit rather than of the *human* spirit as such. The basic truth contained in Hegel's *Phenomenology* is that the West is the only civilization in which “freedom” and “reason” have progressed over the course of history. The distinctiveness of the Western spirit is that it cannot be comprehended as a substance, a state of being, as in other civilizations, but should be apprehended as an “activity”. The rational-liberal culture of the West can be known only by knowing it as an experience that developed *in time*.

Like Weber, Hegel detected an inner necessity (a “dialectical” logic) in the philosophical development of the West. The difference is that Hegel traced this logic to the nature of human reason *per se* to become actually what it was potentially from the beginning. From the first flowerings of philosophy in ancient Greece, Hegel portrayed this rational spirit as if it were in a state of dissatisfaction and alienation, ceaselessly pressing ahead, trying to understand, overcome, and sublimate every non-conceptualized unknown it encountered. He believed that reason started to display this restless disposition – its true nature – when it came to “discover” itself as a faculty in its own right in ancient times. For it was then that reason for the first time apprehended its capacity for self-reflection, to think for-itself, in terms of its own volitional abilities, ceasing to accept passively the existence of norms, gods, and natural things as if they were “things-in-themselves” beyond its own reflective judgments.

Unlike Weber, Hegel did not restrict the experience of Western reason to the rationalizing activities of formal and theoretical reason; he was less preoccupied with the way reason had subjected social life to quantification, precision, and standardization. What drew Hegel's attention was the seemingly restless desire of Western reason to become fully conscious of itself as *free activity*. It was this desire to be the source of its own assumptions and principles that drove Western reason forward until it brought into existence a culture wherein individuals enjoyed freedom of inquiry, tolerance of diverse views, and meritocratic advancement. According to Hegel, individuals become what they are potentially – rationally self-conscious agents – when they recognized themselves as free in their institutions and laws.

The *Phenomenology* is a work that seeks to capture, in a comprehensive manner, the developmental experience of the idea of freedom in its intrinsic association with the developmental experience of reason. It does so by viewing every single major Western

outlook – for example, Roman stoicism, skepticism, Catholic scholasticism, Cartesian rationalism, British empiricism, German idealism, and romanticism – not as isolated or timeless viewpoints but as evolving “moments” in the effort of human reason to become what it is intrinsically: the free author of its own concepts, values, and practices. The *Phenomenology* thus exhibits the ways in which diverse but interrelated outlooks held sway and conviction for some time only to be seen as limited in their inability to provide answers consistent with the demands of beings that are becoming more aware of themselves as the free creators of their own beliefs, laws, and institutions.

The *Phenomenology* is thus an account of the entire dialectic of theses, anti-theses, and syntheses effected throughout history until Hegel’s own time. Hegel believed that humanity had reached in his own time (in the post-French Revolution era of Europe) a point of true and full satisfaction *as far as the conceptualization of the human capacity for free reflection was concerned*. This is why Hegel wrote that Spirit “appears in time just so long as” humans have not achieved a proper self-understanding of themselves as free rational beings; Spirit would continue to evolve *in time*. Hegel’s point was not that there would be no more history after him (no new philosophical outlooks or no further debates about, for example, how widely free speech should be extended). It was that, insofar as the conceptualization of human reason and freedom was concerned – as well as the capacity of the modern liberal democratic state to provide the framework for the expression of one’s freedom – the final stage of history had been reached during his time.

This paper argues that Hegel’s *historical* philosophy should be read as an account of the intellectual developmental experience of the West rather than of humanity. Hegel wrote in his *Philosophy of History* that the first phase of the idea of freedom was to be found in Asia:

In the political life of the east we find a realized rational freedom developing itself without advancing subjective freedom...The glory of Oriental conception is the One individual as that substantial being to which all belongs, so that no other individual has a separate existence, or mirrors himself in his subjective freedom (1956: 105).

But what Hegel saw thereafter in China and India was mere “duration, stability...ahistorical history.”

[While the states and empires in the East] are constantly changing their position towards each other...are in ceaseless conflict, which brings on rapid destruction...This history is, for the most part, really *unhistorical*, for it is only the repetition of the same majestic ruin (1956: 106).

The rest of the history of freedom would take place only in the West, starting with the Greeks and Romans, through the Christians and the Reformation, to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

What explanation did Hegel offer to account for this Western peculiarity? It is rather difficult to decide because, while Hegel was clearly writing about the historical experience of Western reason, he also believed that reason was a human generic faculty. He wrote that “mankind in-itself is rational,” and that the nature of this rational being is to become aware of its own conceptual creations and activities. This is why Hegel was confident with the “possibility of equal rights for all people,” and the possibility that the modern Western conception of freedom would be extended to all the cultures of the world (Pinkard 2000: 493).

Yet, Hegel also wrote of European culture as if it alone had been uniquely characterized, as Pinkard notes, by “a fundamental ‘negativity’ about itself, a kind of permanent self-doubt and self-questioning that constituted its peculiar energy and driving force” (2000: 471). But Pinkard does not tell us why Hegel saw this negativity in Europe alone. He writes that Hegel presented his account of the development of the “Idea” of freedom, in the *Phenomenology*, as if it had been “rationally necessitated by the internal deficiencies of earlier articulations of the Idea” (2000: 491).

This way of reading the *Phenomenology* is in tandem with a long line of Hegel scholars who have interpreted this book as a portrayal of the maturation of human consciousness *as such*. While Hegel scholars are aware that the *Phenomenology* is an account of the historical experience of Western consciousness, and know well enough that this book makes historical allusions to this culture only, to Western historical texts, philosophers, and personalities, they still interpret this book and his philosophy as if it were an exposition of “*human* experience and cognition” (Harris: viii, his italics).

My view is that we can make sense of the seemingly necessary way in which reason actualizes what it is possibly in itself – a rational spirit capable of self-determination and self-legislation – only if we conceive the *Phenomenology* as an intellectual account of the experience of the Western mind, since only this mind has exhibited an intense desire to subject the world to its own ends. It is mainly the Western self that has been unable to feel “at home” in the world until it got rid “of the semblance of being burdened with something alien” (Hegel cited in Stern 2002: 42).

Why this has been so? How do we explain the determination by which the Western mind has sought to overcome, for example, the naturally-given reality of things by comprehending the laws of nature and by creating successively new technologies and new strategies of survival and expansion? Why has the Western mind shown less reluctance to accept “the ineffable mystery of the world”? Why have Westerners been

less willing to accept a social order based on laws and norms which have not been subjected to free reflection?

I believe that Hegel did pose these questions in particular reference to Europe: why the history of this continent came to be such that it could be seen, retrospectively, as “a gradation – a series of increasingly adequate expressions or manifestations of freedom” (1956: 63). He did so in a section of his *Philosophy of History* entitled “Geographical Basis of History,” and in a section of his *Philosophy of Mind* entitled “Anthropology of the Soul.”

Hegel and the Geographical Basis of the “infinite thirst” of the West

His explanation, bluntly expressed, is that the geography of Europe engendered a different human “soul,” “character,” or “personality”. The cultures of China, India, Persia, the Americas, and Europe evolved in dramatically different geographical settings. These different settings deeply affected the character or psyche of its people. Hegel is not a *materialist*-geographical determinist. The role geography plays in his work is fundamentally different from the role it plays, for example, in Jared Diamond. In Diamond, humans are reactive creatures who adapt to the pressures of the environment as they seek to survive; there is no essential difference between humans and animals, both species are fundamentally driven by a *common* desire to survive. Diamond explains divergent outcomes amongst different human communities in terms of divergent resources and geographical locations. For him, the external environment is the active agent of historical differentiation and change. In Hegel, by contrast, different environments have different effects on the psychology of humans and the opportunities available for the exercise of their faculties. Some environments encourage some “character” traits more than others. Different environments may thus work to activate, *to a higher or lesser degree*, certain innate dispositions and potentialities of the human species.

There is, however, an interesting similarity between Diamond and Hegel in the way both call attention to geographical differences *in conscious opposition to racial differences*. The peoples of the world belong to the same species, but their state of being – their mental vision, temperament, and character – is deeply influenced by their place of habitation in the earth. The first general observation Hegel makes is that “the locality of world-historical peoples” are confined to the temperate climatic zone; “in the extreme zones man cannot come to free movement; cold and heat are here too powerful to allow Spirit to build up a world for itself” (1956: 80).

He notes that the three continents of the Old World have “an essential relation to each other, and constitute a totality” in contrast to the peoples of the other continents which have been comparatively isolated (87). This relation lies around a single sea, the Mediterranean, which is the “true theatre of history”; without this sea “the history of the

world could not be conceived: it would be like ancient Rome or Athens without the forum, where all life of the city came together” (87).

India, China, and Mesopotamia, with their river plains, were major players at the outset of human history, but due to certain geographical barriers they remained relatively enclosed within themselves, with the sea having less influence on their culture (101). Meanwhile, Europe, among the Mediterranean regions, opened up the area beyond the Alps to start a new epoch in human history encompassing the Atlantic (88).

For Hegel, the “character” of Europeans was fundamentally molded by the sea. The sea was not merely an economic opportunity, an invitation to commerce; it was an intense stimulant to the human soul and mind:

The sea gives us the idea of the indefinite, the unlimited, and infinite; and in *feeling his own infinite* in that Infinite, man is stimulated and emboldened to stretch beyond the limited (90).

The sea cultivated a distinct sense of the known and the unknown, the finite and the infinite, and a curiosity about the limits beyond the known. The experience of a life-style in the sea produced less restrained personalities. But there is more to the geography of the place we call “Europe.”

Hegel notes, as well, the greater environmental diversity of Europe and the fact that its mountains, plains, valleys and streams are all “of limited extent” and no one great river or plain dominates the ecology. He contrast this variety to the Eastern states, wherein the “prominence” of “single massive features” – deserts cut off by major rivers – give the landscape a “monotony” lacking in the stimulation of the senses and the mind's eye. In the West, the horizon was “diversified,” in the East, the horizon exhibited “one unvarying form” (90, 225).

In *Uniqueness of Western Civilization*, I add to Hegel that one other distinctive geographical attribute of Europe was the so-called “Middle European Corridor leading from the Atlantic to the Black Sea,” and eastwards through the Pontic steppe across the Volga and the Urals. This corridor and its link to the steppes, with its pastoral, horse-riding way of life, was a crucial geographical component in the formation of Europe’s uniquely restless culture.

Hegel and the Beginnings of Western Reason

To this day no one knows how to account for the origins of the “Greek miracle.” In stark contrast to the numerous explanations which have been offered on all the other major revolutionary transformations of Europe, no strong or consensual argument has yet been produced in response to why ancient Greece “discovered the mind,” discovered the

method of causal science, invented the literary form of tragedy, prose writing, and tapped into the progressive spirit of critical reason. Many classicists have offered no more than tautological explanations in which the *explanandum* reappears in the *explanans*: “Greek philosophy grew out of an exclusive national culture and is the legitimate offspring of the Greek spirit” (Windelband 1956: 3); “Greek philosophy has a good claim to be regarded as the most original and influential achievement of the Greek genius” (Luce 1992: 9).

One influential but rather question-begging explanation is that Ionia, the birth place of Greek natural philosophy, located in coastal areas of present-day Turkey, was dotted by mercantile city-states that looked favorably upon innovation, criticism and individual expression. The worlds of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Phoenicia, however, were similarly cosmopolitan, urbane, and commercial. Some have added that a community of rational inquiry was made possible by the emergence in Ionia, and in Greece at large, of a unique institution, the *polis*. It has been argued that the *polis*, by being a free political institution in which all male citizens were free to participate in the affairs of their city, promoted a culture characterized by reasoned discourse and debate, adversarial viewpoints, and a disposition for seeking out the truth on rational grounds.

But why did Ionia-Greece see the rise of a freely-organized political community in the first place – and not the more advanced civilizations of the Near East, or, for that matter, the Sumerian city states which dominated the Mesopotamian landscape around 2500 BC? Collins answers in passing that the “Greeks retained the crude democracy of tribal war coalitions” in their city-states (6). The problem here is that all civilized cultures and cities came originally from tribal backgrounds and tribal “democracies.” Was there anything unique to the tribal organization of the Greek city-states?

McClellan and Dorn have tried an explanation that points to the geographical distinctiveness of Greece. They argue that the mountainous ecology of Greece, which compartmentalized the land into separate valleys, encouraged the rise of small independent city-states. They also contrast Greece’s rainfall farming to the great rivers and large flood plains of the East. They observe that the former promoted decentralized economic activities whereas the latter promoted hydraulic agriculture and monarchical administrations (1999: 55-59).

The incompleteness of this explanation is that it presumes that the “competitiveness” evoked by the presence of hundreds of city-states produced, on its own, a republican government of citizen-soldiers. It presumes as well that the mere existence of independent city-states and citizen-soldiers cultivated an ethos of free discourse and “a new sort of science” devoted to the pursuit of “theoretical knowledge”. McClellan and Dorn are seemingly aware that something is missing in their explanation, concluding: “it may be impossible to reach an understanding of exactly why a new scientific culture came into being in the unique habitat of Hellas” (57).

What Hegel suggests to me, albeit in a very general way, is that there were already in Greece – before the *polis* – characters unwilling to submit to despotic rule. There is no space here to explain what I mean by these characters. Suffice it to say now that the polis was created by a pre-existing aristocratic culture whose values were physical prowess, courage, fierce protection of one's family, friends, and property, and above all, one's *personal* honor and reputation. The polis grew out of a peculiar social landscape of tribal *republics* in which *individual* rivalry for prestige and victory had the highest value, and in which hatred of monarchical government was the norm. Before citizenship was expanded to include independent farmers and hoplite soldiers, the Greek mainland was dominated by a warrior aristocracy. This expansive and aggressive aristocracy was the original persona of Western civilization.

What I have highlighted from Hegel is certainly inadequate. I have tried to suggest that Hegel's "inner dialectical necessity" makes more sense if we see it as an account of a peculiarly restless mind. Most of the dialectical steps in this book are brought forth by human beings who have already "discovered the mind" and have started to reason beyond the pre-reflective customs and habits of their community through a dialectical style of reasoning. We find this form of reflection earliest in the Milesians. The Milesians are the fathers of rational thought, the "first men self-consciously to subordinate assertion to argument and dogma to logic" (Barnes 1982: 5). With the onset of Ionian philosophy, what had been hitherto "*only a possibility*" – the use of reason in a self-conscious way – "*begins to manifest itself in the conduct of the World's affairs*" (Hegel 1956: 57, my italics).

Hegel on the "desire" of World-Historical Individuals

In Hegel there is another major insight which takes us back in time to the earliest manifestations of Western freedom – before the rise of the *polis*, *before the first expression of Western reason in Ionia*. This insight became clear to me after I approached Hegel's historical philosophy for what it says about *Western* culture in particular rather than for what it says about humans in general. While Hegel wrote of reason as if it was driven by an inner necessity to make the world its own, he accepted Kant's idea that human passion, ambition, and egoism were the handmaids of reason. The actual social advancement of reason was not a matter of the "inner necessity" of reasoning alone, of "thought thinking itself". Humans were not ethereal minds cut off from the elements of life; they were creatures *of nature* with instincts, desires, and interests.

We must be careful, however. There are two different contexts in which Hegel writes of the role of human *desire*: First, in reference to actual historical/political actors, as he does in his *Philosophy of History* and, second, in the context of section "B. Self-Consciousness" in the *Phenomenology* which contains the famous dialectic of the

master/slave relationship. When Hegel writes of desires in his philosophy of history he is thinking of both the everyday passions of ordinary humans and the extraordinary passions of great individuals. This argument is squarely in line with Kant's reasoning whereby the march of humans to higher levels of culture results from their "unsocial sociability." Hegel agrees that without qualities of an unsocial kind, out of which the spiritual and physical tortures of world history have arisen, all the potentialities of humans would have remained hidden in their germ. Hegel, however, came up with his own term, "the cunning of reason," to refer to the fact that human beings, in pursuing their private aims, were not always fully conscious of the temporal possibilities of history and of the way their own actions participated in the furtherance of those possibilities.

Hegel, however, made an interesting distinction, if implicit, in the way the "cunning of reason" utilizes the ordinary desires of average humans, and the way it utilizes the extraordinary passions of "world-historical individuals" (1978: 36, 40). The cunning of reason we observe on a daily basis, so to speak, consists in the way that reason employs the desires of normal individuals to sustain the ongoing state of affairs. But the cunning of reason that is associated with the passions of "world-historical individuals" such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon, is altogether different in the way it brings about new stages in the development of freedom. Only heroic individuals have passions powerful enough to break the bonds of the old order. Mere desires for wealth and security are hardly their driving passions. They want to achieve immortality even at the price of bodily discomfort, happiness, and premature death (1978:41). Thus, in this sense, Hegel makes a distinction between appetitive desires and status-seeking desires.

Although "world historical individuals" are "practical and political men" with no philosophical grasp of the movement of reason in history, Hegel is quite clear that, "at the same time they are thinkers with insight into what is needed and timely." Thus, Napoleon was driven by his lust for conquest while simultaneously bringing to the nations he conquered the new ideals of the Enlightenment that France had realized in the Revolution of 1789. Many of the countries he invaded were indeed compelled to liberalize their laws, abolish serfdom, improve and extend education. The tragedy is that thousands of soldiers and innocent people, whole cultures and institutions, were ruthlessly destroyed in order to bring about a new stage of freedom.

It was, indeed, world-historical individuals, with their excessive pride and willfulness, who have done the most to push forward new ideals, challenging political orders where ordinary human passions tended to fall asleep, reawakening again and again the commoners to pit themselves against each other in the name of new principles, violating old religions moralities, looking for new lands, and transgressing the boundaries of the unknown. But what do these "world historical individuals" have to do with my claim that Hegel's insights into the nature of human desire take us back in time to the most primitive manifestations of Western freedom before the rise of the polis?

The Master-Slave Dialectic and its Historical Reference

This brings me to the second context in which Hegel uses the word “desire”: in Section B, “Self-Consciousness” of the *Phenomenology* (1977), Chapter 4 entitled “The Truth of Self-Certainty,” which contains the famous account of “Lordship and Bondage.” Today, the most common interpretation of the lordship and bondage section (or the master-slave struggle) is that it is a parable about the nature of “selfhood” in which Hegel sets out to demonstrate that self-consciousness becomes determinate only through communication with another self-consciousness. Hegel sets out to show that true recognition depends on a relation of mutual equality in which there are neither masters nor slaves (Rockmore 1997: 64-72).

The master-slave dialectic, it is true, is intended to illustrate that one “cannot achieve self-certainty except as a member of a community of free persons who mutually recognize one another’s rights” (Wood 1990: 93). This dialectic ends with the image of a master who cannot feel satisfaction from the recognition he gets from his servant. But this relates to the *eventual outcome*. We should not underestimate the dynamic which precedes the creation of master-slave relationship. The opening paragraphs of Hegel’s master-slave dialectic describe two combatants engaging in a life-and-death struggle for the sake of “pure prestige.”

Thus, in its very origins, before there is any master and slave, we have a confrontation between two independent individuals, each of whom is driven to fight the other because each desires to wrest superior recognition from another self. The desire of the combatants is *not* for reciprocal appreciation. The concluding outcome is a relation of mutual recognition, but in the beginning we are dealing with two self-assertive individuals for whom the other is an object that needs to be subordinated.

I would argue, furthermore, that this initial struggle can be read as Hegel’s version of the “state of nature” parable first presented by Hobbes and Locke. My reading here is indebted to Alexandre Kojève’s much discussed, but not well understood, lectures on Hegel, which he gave in Paris during the years 1933-1939. Kojève does not state explicitly that this fight is a description of the state of nature, but he does write as if it had an empirical or anthropological basis in the past before the formation of states. I will go beyond Kojève, however, in suggesting that the life and death struggle that brings about the master-slave relation should be read as a description of the *Western* state of nature.

Kojève offers a far more penetrating account of the role of desire in Hegel’s philosophy. He does so by belaboring the point that self-consciousness makes its appearance in the decision “of Man” to fight to the death for the sake of recognition. Kojève explains that “Man” starts to become “truly” self-conscious only to the extent that he “actively” engages in a fight where he risks his life “for something that does not exist really” – that

is, “solely ‘for glory’ or for the sake of his ‘vanity’ alone (which by this risk, ceases to be ‘vain’ and becomes the specifically human value of honor” (1999: 226). I have learned from Kojève (and I agree that this idea is not as definite in Hegel) that the section on “Self-Consciousness” opens with this fight because it wants to show that “Man” becomes self-conscious of “his humanity only by negating himself as animal,” in his willingness to risk his life, and thus negate his biological fear of death, for the sake of being esteemed by another human being (222-25). Kojève also wants to show that it is in the attitude of “being-for-self” or self-assertiveness (rather than in the attitude of “being-for-another or deference) that man brings about a profound effect on the constitution of the human personality, leading to discovery of a unified self – this is a point I will explore further later.

The “very foundation” of the being of a human is not abstract contemplation, cognition *per se*, but the desire for something. The desire for food is a biological desire, which is satisfied by the action of eating. But if one is to realize one’s “I” as a distinctive “I” one must not allow one’s “I” to be determined by the non-I which one desires. Desire is human, and not merely animal, to the degree that one’s desire is “directed toward another desire and an *other* Desire.” One acts in a human way when one’s desires are not merely for the thing alone, but so as “to make another recognize [one’s] right to that thing.” In the desire for other humans to recognize one’s desires one brings out one’s human, non-biological “I”. It is at this point that one desires an immaterial, intentional, and therefore uniquely human, object of desire.

Now, since there is a “multiplicity of desires,” the action that springs out from wanting others to make one’s desire the desire of others will result in a fight in which each desiring subject will want to subsume the other’s desires just for the sake of wresting from the other the importance of one’s own desires. Only those humans who are willing to risk their biological being for the sake of a non-biological recognition from others are truly humans (Kojève 1999: 5-8, 40-41).

For Kojève, it is in the risking of one’s life that an individual first discovers or reaches a consciousness of his human *self*, because it is through this act that man negates his “objective-or-thingish mode-of-being,” showing that he is not bound by “any determinate existence.” Kojève interprets Hegel to be saying that in order to achieve human self-consciousness, a man must be willing to put his life at risk; he must be willing to fight to the death. He must be a willful, assertive character who has the courage to affirm his “being-for-self” rather than to defer to another. This is why “Man” is obligated to start wars, for it is only through action and the risk of life that consciousness of oneself as an independent being that is not merely dominated by the dictates of nature comes to light. In the willingness to fight it becomes clear that “Man” is not a “given-thing,” does not exist “in a purely passive way, but is a being that creates himself by conscious “Action.”

One's willingness to assert one's "being-for-self" is the precondition for a life that is freely willed by one's own intentions and goals. It is the precondition for the achievement of recognition by another consciousness and the first instance by which humans achieve individual consciousness. The willful self must therefore "provoke" the other; force him to start a fight with him (Ibid: 11-13). It is through actual fighting for pure prestige that man first becomes self-conscious of his "freedom" by negating his fear of death and acting according to his chosen ideals in-and-through a struggle with another human.

What we witness in this dialectic is the first "authentic appearance of Freedom" (Ibid: 230). The master is the first historical character to freely create a specifically human world by acting in the name of something as immaterial as "recognition". All other desires are acted upon to satisfy our biological urges, but the desire for recognition is the only desire that is quintessentially immaterial and human. When humans strive for status and prestige they are seeking the desire of another; they are craving for the other person's desire to be directed towards them.

In my book, *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization*, I argue that here was a uniquely Western state of nature which can be illustrated (in detail) by reference to the prehistory of Indo-European aristocratic berserkers, including "barbarian" Europeans. I elaborate further on Kojeve's interpretation of this dialectic, and question his argument (and by implication Hegel's) to argue, rather, that a battle for prestige does not logically entail as its outcome a social relation in which one *singular* master (upon winning the fight) imposes his authority over a servile man. It makes more sense to envision this battle as a contest between two warriors each inhabiting a pre-historic aristocratic culture in which the highest ideal of life was the attainment of recognition through the performance of heroic deeds. It is consistent with the tenor of Hegel's argument to revise his dialectic in such a way that i) the fighting men are each seen as members of an aristocracy in which the main ethos of life was the pursuit of prestige through the performance of great deeds; and ii) the recognition sought by the fighters was from their peers and not from the ones who were *de facto* enslaved.

I argue that the beginnings of self-consciousness presuppose the historical existence of self-assertive characters living in a heroic culture. The unceasing aristocratic desire for personal distinction was, in fact, the basis for the awakening of human self-consciousness and the eventual formation of an integrated personality capable of understanding the opposition between the "natural" and the "mental" world, leading to the dialectic of Western reason and freedom, which Hegel captured in his *Phenomenology of the [Western] Spirit*.

I also show in my book that the Indo-European speaking cultures that came to dominate Europe in a unique way starting in the 4th millennium should be considered as constituting the "beginning" of the West. Bronze Age Europe was a pre-state "social

arrangement” dominated by warrior elites who were duty-bound to confirm the essential reality of their status by displaying their prowess in deeds, by leading raids against distant neighbors, acquiring booty, cattle, and women, *and* particularly by fighting in *single* combat. The primordial roots of the West’s restlessness lay in the fearless assertiveness of its founding aristocratic fathers.

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